

As founder of the Congressional Caucus on Missing and Exploited Children, I invite all of our colleagues to join our caucus and help protect America's children.

During the 105th Congress, a family in the Ninth Congressional District of Texas experienced an unthinkable tragedy. Laura Kate Smither, a 12-year-old, was abducted and brutally murdered. In Laura's name, the Congressional Caucus on Missing and Exploited Children was founded. What Laura's dreadful tragedy has taught us is that we must do more to protect our children.

As a society, our efforts to prevent crimes against children have not kept pace with the increasing vulnerability of our young citizens. Please join this very important caucus, if you have not already, and all of our new Members, please do so quickly. You have a letter coming to you today or tomorrow. Our children, our grandchildren, our nieces and nephews are counting on you to give them a voice in Washington.

□ 1015

TAX RELIEF AND FRIVOLOUS LAWSUIT REFORM

(Mr. GRAVES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I want to urge my colleagues to focus on returning more Americans to work. Although our economy continues to grow, I believe we should accelerate the economic recovery to help get more Americans back to work as soon as possible by focusing on two priorities, tax relief designed to get Americans working again and frivolous lawsuit reform. High taxes continue to be a burden on American families. Now is the time to accelerate the tax relief we passed last Congress, provide incentives to businesses to invest in new workers, and provide fair investor tax relief to boost our economic recovery.

We also look for fairness in the legal system. Frivolous lawsuits not only clog our court systems, but they cause higher prices for consumers and threaten robust job creation. As a result, too many businesses, especially small businesses, are investing too much money and paying excessive and frivolous punitive damages and not enough money invested in health care benefits for workers and new job creation. We must protect the rights of individuals who have been wronged, but we should not permit frivolous lawsuits at the expense of the American worker and consumer.

Frivolous lawsuit reform and tax relief are the key to healthy economic recovery and job creation. The sooner we act, the faster we can begin to get Americans back to work.

A NEW VISION FOR THE ECONOMY

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, like many people across eastern Indiana, I was shocked and dismayed yesterday to learn of the complete elimination of over 400 manufacturing jobs from Anderson, Indiana. It is therefore altogether fitting that we would as our first priority in Congress in this majority, Mr. Speaker, pass an extension of unemployment benefits to help Americans like those in Anderson who will be beset by these layoffs. I also applaud the President of the United States, who outlined a jobs package yesterday that I believe is a good start.

But it is written, Mr. Speaker, that without a vision the people perish, and I would paraphrase by saying that without a vision economies perish as well. I would challenge this Congress and leadership in my own party to not just be content, Mr. Speaker, with unemployment insurance extensions, helping those that are laid off, or passing legislation that simply alleviates a recession. We need a new vision for an economy that is abundant and growing at historic levels. We need to bring additional tax relief that will unleash the entrepreneurial energy of the American economy as never before, and part of that must be tax relief designed at encouraging and promoting capital formation.

CLONING BAN

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, recently a religious group called the Raelians announced that they had cloned a human being, and despite all the press coverage they have received most observers are convinced this is a hoax. But true or not, this episode underscores the fact that human cloning is no longer limited to B movie science fiction. The technology exists. It may take hundreds of tries and it may result in dozens of horribly mutated human embryos and the violation of every standard of ethics and decency, but human cloning is very close to happening.

Congress must act before it is too late. We need to pass a comprehensive human cloning ban into law immediately. The House did its job last year, passed a bill that died in the Senate. Now both Houses of Congress need to pass a comprehensive cloning ban. We need to stop this horror before it happens.

The bill is being introduced today by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON). I urge my colleagues to co-sponsor this important bill, and I urge the House to pass it as soon as possible. It is still not too late for us to act.

HONORING JOE FOSS

(Mr. HAYWORTH asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow afternoon in Scottsdale, Arizona at 2 o'clock Mountain Standard Time, there will be a memorial service held for the man described as the ace of aces, a genuine hero, Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Joe Foss.

Joe Foss accomplished much in his life. Indeed Tom Brokaw in his book *The Greatest Generation* devoted an entire chapter to the life of Joe Foss. It was a remarkable life, not only in wartime but in winning the peace. A two-term governor of South Dakota, the first commissioner of the American Football League, president of the National Rifle Association, a television personality in his own right, and finally in retirement Joe Foss relocated to Arizona.

It was my privilege to know this great and good man, this genuine American hero who despite the reputation of fliers had none of the swagger but all of the humility and humble nature that a man could possess.

The story goes once a journalist asked Joe Foss about his many earthly accomplishments, and Joe said "Yeah, I guess I have done a lot of things but nothing compares to the day when I met the Lord." Now Joe Foss is with the Lord, and I know the people of Arizona along with the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. JANKLOW), the people of South Dakota, and all of America remember and revere this great American. At ease, Joe, rest in peace.

REMOVING THE TAX ON DIVIDENDS

(Mr. SESSIONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, President Bush this week announced plans to make sure that in the tax proposals that this Congress will address that as part of that tax package we will not tax dividends, and I want to stand up and say how proud I am of what the President is doing because it is furthering the commitment that I believe this House of Representatives should have as well as the President to where we do not tax savings or investment in America.

I believe as the vigorous debate takes place across this country and in this body we will find out that this will be good for people who will be able to save money, save money, and not have it taxed in between that period of time every year for tax purposes but will see their savings grow. I am proud of what this President is doing. I plan to support not only his tax bill but the things the President does, and I offer a hearty congratulations to the President of the United States, George W. Bush.

MERCURY IN VACCINATIONS

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana asked and was given permission to address the

House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, everybody knows that mercury is a toxic substance. If it is spilled on the ground, they evacuate the area and they bring in the fire department and they clean it up with all kinds of paraphernalia to protect the citizens and the firemen that are working on it, and yet it is injected into our children's bodies in our vaccinations, and in the Homeland Security bill this year they eliminated the possibility of the families who have been damaged and the children who have been damaged by the mercury in these vaccines from having any chance to get restitution from the pharmaceutical companies or from the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund. That is criminal. It needs to be changed.

We have the fastest growing epidemic in America and the parents have nowhere to go, and it is caused in large part by the mercury in the vaccines. This is just tragic. We need to correct that in the technical corrections bill very, very quickly so these parents have some recourse. They are mortgaging their homes. They are going bankrupt trying to take care of these children. One in 10,000 children used to be autistic. Now it is one in 180. It is an absolute epidemic and this government prohibited the families from finding a way to take care of their children, and these kids are going to grow up. These kids are going to grow up, and they are going to be a burden on society unless we do something about it now.

And in addition Mr. Speaker, I just found out that the vaccines that we are giving to our military personnel who are over in the Persian Gulf who may be going to war with Iraq, they are being vaccinated with vaccines that contain mercury as well.

We need to get mercury out of all vaccines and we need to make absolutely sure that the parents who have damaged children have some course to get restitution this government should not block. It is criminal.

PRESIDENT'S STIMULUS PACKAGE

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I just want to say how disappointed I was with the President's so-called economic stimulus package that was announced yesterday. First of all, there is no immediate jumpstart to the economy, and this is just more of the same: Tax breaks essentially to the wealthy, to corporate interests, and very little that means anything for the average American.

Mr. Speaker, we have a tremendous problem with an economic downturn. We have more and more people who have lost their jobs. This is not the time to continue the same failed economic policies. The Democrats have talked about basically giving money

back to consumers in the form of a rebate. We have talked about extending unemployment compensation for at least 26 weeks. In addition to that, our plan is a real economic stimulus. It gets the economy going again and does not basically put together long-term deficits.

If you listen to what the President and the Republicans have been proposing, it is just going to put the economy and the Federal Government into debt even greater, as much as \$2 trillion perhaps over the next 10 years. Why do we continue with the same failed Republican policies? Let us do something that gets people back to work, that creates jobs, that gives some money back to the States because the States have so many problems now with their own deficits. The Federal Government has to do something now that is going to make a difference for the average American, and that is not what we are hearing from the Bush administration. We are just hearing the same thing about giving more tax breaks, eliminating dividends with regard to stocks. These things are not going to do anything in the next year to actually help the American people. In fact, I am very fearful that there is a potential that the economic situation even gets worse unless we get together on a bipartisan basis.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). The Chair has a statement about the length of electronic votes.

Clause 4 of rule XX says that Members shall have at least 15 minutes to respond on an ordinary recorded vote or quorum call. But with the cooperation of Members, it is possible to complete a vote in that time.

The Chair believes that closing votes as soon as possible after the guaranteed minimum time should be the regular practice. The Chair is certain that votes can be shortened if Members simply resolve to head to the Chamber as soon as they are notified by the bell and light signal. The Chair will remind Members when two minutes remain on the clock.

The goal of completing votes in as close to the minimum time as possible is even more reasonable in the case of a 5-minute vote because every 5-minute vote necessarily follows another electronic vote and it is always preceded by an announcement from the Chair and a distinctive bell and light signal.

Each occupant of the Chair will have the full support of the Speaker in striving to close each electronic vote at the earliest opportunity. Members should not rely on signals relayed from outside the Chamber to assume that votes will be held open until they arrive in the Chamber.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF S. 23, EXTENSION OF TEM- PORARY EXTENDED UNEMPLOY- MENT COMPENSATION ACT OF 2002

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 14 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 14

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the bill (S. 23) to provide for a 5-month extension of the Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2002 and for a transition period for individuals receiving compensation when the program under such Act ends. The bill shall be considered as read for amendment. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate on the bill equally divided and controlled by Representative Thomas of California and Representative Rangel of New York; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 2. The allocations referred to in section 3(a)(4)(B)(i) of House Resolution 5 may be submitted by Representative Nussle of Iowa.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

The rule provides for 1 hour of debate and waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. As we begin the 108th Congress I would like to point out that we intend to continue the courtesy that we began when the Republicans became the majority. This rule allows us to continue in the tradition of extending the minority party an opportunity to offer a motion to recommit.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution before us today allows us to debate and consider a most important measure, S-23, which provides for a 5-month extension of the Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2002. Last Congress we passed the Job Creation and Worker Assistance Act of 2002, which became Public Law 107-147. This economic stimulus bill includes a temporary extension of unemployment compensation and provides for the temporary extended unemployment compensation program.

□ 1030

This program provided up to 13 additional weeks of federally funded benefits for unemployed workers in all States. Benefits were payable to qualified workers through December 28, 2002. Though several attempts were made, and language extending this program was passed by the House, the 107th Congress unfortunately adjourned without having passed an extension.